

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-10 IO-13 OMB-01 SSM-05 AID-05
TRSE-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 /090 W
-----181221Z 107100 /15

O R 181048Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5305
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: BLITZER--STATE DEPARTMENT WON'T CLARIFY HOMELAND

1. JERUSALEM POST MARCH 18 CARRIED THE FOLLOWING REPORT
BY WOLF BLITZER HEADLINED "STATE DEPARTMENT WON'T CLARIFY
'HOMELAND'."

BEGIN TEXT

2. DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION FROM THE
ISRAEL EMBASSY, THE STATE DEPARTMENT YESTERDAY DECLINED
TO SAY WHAT PRESIDENT JINNY CARTER HAD IN MIND ON WED-
NESDAY EVENING WHEN HE CALLED FOR A PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND".

3. A SPOKESMAN MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT COMING
OUT IN FAVOR OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE
ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP--AS SOME OBSERVERS HERE
WERE INTERPRETING CARTER'S REMARKS. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN
HERE WERE MERELY SAYING THAT CARTER'S STATEMENT
"SPEAKS FOR ITSELF."

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4. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN FREDERICK BROWN DE-
CLINED TO SAY AT THE DAILY NEWS BRIEFING THAT CARTER'S
REMARKS DID NOT REPRESENT A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY--
A DEVELOPMENT THAT LED TO A HURRIED TELEPHONE CALL
FROM ISRAEL AMBASSADOR SIMCHA DINITZ TO ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF STATE ALFRED ATHERTON, URGING THAT SUCH

A STATEMENT BE MADE.

5. ATHERTON SAID THAT HE WOULD INSTRUCT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S PRESS OFFICE TO RELEASE SUCH A STATEMENT, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT U.S. POLICY REMAINS UNCHANGED. PRIVATELY, ATHERTON SAID THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN POLICY.

6. BUT THERE WERE LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT THE DRIFT OF U.S. POLICY ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE, AND ISRAELI EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE CONTINUED SEEKING CLARIFICATION OF WHAT THE PRESIDENT MEANT.

7. THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ABOUT A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND CAME IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AT A "TOWN MEETING" IN CLINTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

8. AS OF LATE LAST NIGHT, ISRAELI OFFICIALS HERE WERE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED BY U.S. REASSURANCES THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE INTENDED.

9. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL SAID THE WORD HOMELAND "HAS NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE." HE SAID CARTER HAD CONSISTENTLY STATED THAT AN OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT MUST HAVE AS A BASIC INGREDIENT "A PLACE FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO CALL 'HOME'."

10. BROWN, AT THE NEWS BRIEFING, SAID THAT "WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID SPEAKS FOR ITSELF." HE SAID THAT THE STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE "COHESIVE AND COMPLETE UNCLASSIFIED

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POSITION OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT," AND THAT THERE WAS NO DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN CARTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE ON THIS ISSUE. BUT HE DID NOT SAY WHETHER OR NOT VANCE KNEW IN ADVANCE THAT CARTER WOULD MAKE THE STATEMENT.

11. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN IN TERMS OF A HOMELAND FOR THE PALESTINIANS. IN THE PAST, THE U.S. HAS SAID ONLY THAT THE "LEGITIMATE INTERESTS" OF THE PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN ANY SETTLEMENT, WITHOUT DEFINING HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE.

12. ISRAELI EMBASSY OFFICIALS COMMUNICATED ISRAEL'S IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT YESTERDAY MORNING, EXPECTING THAT THIS WOULD RESULT IN QUICK STATE DEPARTMENT CLARIFICATION. BUT BROWN'S STATEMENTS SEEMED TO HEIGHTEN THE STRAIN BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

13. FOR EXAMPLE, AT ONE POINT DURING THE BRIEFING, THE SPOKESMAN WOULD NOT SAY WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS CURRENTLY A "REASSESSMENT" OF U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. "WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A REASSESSMENT OR A REAPPRAISAL, I'M NOT GOING TO COMMENT," BROWN SAID.

14. SPEAKING FROM PREPARED NOTES, THE SPOKESMAN CONTINUED: "AS THE PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR, HIS REMARKS DO NOT IMPLY WHAT FORM A SOLUTION SHOULD TAKE." HE INSISTED THAT IF ONE WERE TO READ THE ENTIRE STATEMENT, IT WOULD BE CLEAR THAT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST BE RESOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES.

15. AFTER MAKING THAT INITIAL STATEMENT, BROWN DECLINED
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TO GO ANY FURTHER IN OUTLINING THE U.S. POSITION. HE WOULD NOT SAY WHETHER U.S. POLICY HAS CHANGED, AND THAT LED TO THE DINITZ TELEPHONE CALL TO ATHERTON.

16. BROWN SAID CARTER HAD BEEN "EXTRAORDINARILY WELL-BRIEFED" AND THAT HIS REMARKS-- WHICH ALSO CALLED FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND ISRAEL ON THE UNSPECIFIED "HOMELAND"--WERE A STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY.

17. SPEAKING CAUTIOUSLY AT THE "TOWN MEETING," CARTER OBVIOUSLY WAS ANXIOUS NOT TO UPSET ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES WITH ANY PORTION OF HIS REMARKS--LIKE HE DID LAST WEEK DURING A NEWS CONFERENCE HERE.

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18. DURING HIS REPLY TO THE QUESTION, CARTER DID NOT MENTION SOME OF THE CONTROVERSIAL CODE WORDS AND KEY PHRASES HE USED LAST WEEK, SUCH AS "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS," OR "MINOR ADJUSTMENTS" IN THE PRE-1967 BORDER. HE DID COME OUT ONCE AGAIN FOR A "REAL PEACE," INCLUDING OPEN BORDERS, TRADE, COMMUNICATION, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES--A POSITION SUPPORTED BY ISRAEL.

19. BROWN SAID THAT CARTER'S REMARKS REPRESENT "THE LATEST STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY."

20. THE STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING WAS ONE OF THE STORMIEST IN RECENT MEMORY, AS THE SPOKESMAN DECLINED TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT THE U.S. HAS IN MIND WHEN SPEAKING OF A "HOMELAND", WHILE REPORTERS ANXIOUSLY SOUGHT INFORMATION.

21. OTHER THAN THE BRIEF REFERENCE TO A PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND" IN CARTER'S STATEMENT, THE REST OF THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST WERE CONSIDERED UNCLASSIFIED

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HERE TO HAVE BEEN POSITIVE, FROM ISRAEL'S STANDPOINT.
END OF TEXT.
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Message Attributes

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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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SAS ID: 3061032
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: BLITZER--STATE DEPARTMENT WON'T CLARIFY HOMELAND
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, IS, US, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d8a35cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009